

## **No Mirrors** by **Memessavedme**

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**Summary:**

I wrote this in one go without planning or proof reading so hope you enjoyed lol

## No Mirrors

No mirrors. That was the rule if Billy was going to stay with Steve after being discharged from intensive care. Gone or covered up for when he got there. A demand that threw Steve because Billy had always had mirrors around, looked for his reflection in car windows and television screens. Not anymore.

It wasn't until Steve saw him walking out of the hospital exit that he understood why, he knew himself that he would feel exactly the same way. His hair completely gone, his hands shaking as he opened the passenger door and slipped inside carefully. That was when he truly understood the reasoning, his face.

His once perfectly even tanned complexion replaced by a scar running across from his left cheek, over his nose and just missing his right eye splitting his eyebrow in half. Raw and red contrasting with his now pale skin, still healing like the rest of him. His cheeks more hollow than Steve remembered, his shoulders smaller and the fire in his eyes completely gone.

This was the shell of the boy who once beat him half to death. The same boy who challenged his every move, watched him for a year at a distance. Except, it wasn't him. Not anymore.

It wasn't like he was the first option for where he would go. Joyce had left town before he was released, Hopper gone and Max refusing to let him return home. Her reasoning being a valid argument that Steve couldn't disagree with.

They weren't enemies, just not really friends but at a mutual understanding. The kind of understanding that somehow leads to a very confusing hand job in the toilets at prom, which would have definitely went further if someone hadn't banged on the door needing a drunken shit.

Steve had thought of visiting, for that moment's sake but Max had turned him away. Explained he didn't want anyone to see him,

something he now understood. So he stayed away, asked for updates and eventually offered his spare bedroom for him to hide in until....well whatever was next.

A *hey* and a *thanks* were exchanged before Steve took off for home, nothing else being said until Billy followed Steve through the front door with his hood thrown up, eyes glued to the floor.

"Thanks for this," He said, almost whispered as Steve put his bags down.

"No problem, man."

The Mindflyer had swallowed up Billy Hargrove, a boy filled with fear and rage only to spit him back out barely recognisable. He'd had a run down of his medical file, chlorine and bleach to the stomach means so strong foods for a long time. Temporary brain damage that faded but could reoccur if he has an episode caused by some sort of trigger or PTSD. Damage to his lungs causing asthma and frequent attacks. A list of medication and appointments up until next year.

It was a miracle he was standing there. Different but alive.

On the third day into his stay Steve caught a glance at his body as he climbed out of the shower with the door half open. Scars running up his sides, an explosion on white tissue on his chest and back. What looked almost like white vines crawling up his arms to his elbows. No mirrors made more and more sense the more Steve saw.

Billy didn't sleep, if he did he woke up yelling for help. Causing Steve to instinctively come running along the landing to see if he was alright, only to find him curled in a ball with streams of tears down his cheeks.

It was gut wrenching to see him like this, his life now a living nightmare he couldn't escape and all Steve could do was feed him and check his meds. That was until one night as he turned to leave he heard; "Wait."

"Do you need a drink or something?" Steve replied.

"Stay with me. Please," For the first time since he had picked him up

their eyes met.

"Okay."

At first he crawled in beside him and turned over to face away from the boy, the feelings he was still trying to figure out. Then he began sleeping in his bed every night, running his fingers down his back to calm him. Eventually their fingers entwined, bodies getting closer and closer until their faces were mere centimetres apart in the darkness of the spare bedroom.

"You know prom?" Steve asked, Billy eyes fluttering open.

"Yeah."

"I think about it a lot you know?"

"Really? I thought you were too drunk to remember all that," Billy replied and Steve shifted his body closer.

"I wanted it to keep going."

"Oh," Billy breathed and looked away for a second.

"I think I like you.. a lot."

There was a silence, the kind that makes you want to shove whatever you had just said right back into your mouth and run away to Spain.

"I've liked you since I got here. I was just drunk enough to actually try it at prom so when you went with it I thought it was going to happen again but," This was the most he had spoken in two weeks. "Then summer happened and well..."

"Really?" Steve asked. "Do you still like me?"

"Yeah."

It was as if his body moved before his brain could process it. Their lips met soft, gentle. Just long enough to remind Steve of that toilet stall. "Wow."

"But my face...my body..it's-."

"It's what? Scarred? Injured and healing? So what?" Steve interrupted him.

After that Billy began to smile every so often, at dumb jokes or whenever Steve walked past him. Billy moved into Steve's room, their bodies now pressed up against each other to help stop the night terrors. Which it somehow did, except for the odd few that nearly sent Steve flying out of bed with his heart in his throat.

The scars didn't fade but the idea of their hideousness did, ever so gradually with Steve's help. Every late night lying entwined half naked and exhausted as he traced the white lines on his chest helped more than he would ever know. Every nice word used to describe them, every sharp line making them into pictures of badly drawn animals making Billy laugh. Smile.

Still no mirrors. A rule that fully added itself up when Billy confessed it wasn't just his appearance but the memories of staring at himself trying to figure out what was happening to him. Watching the reflection of himself put Heather into the bathtub, catch glimpses of himself in the rear view mirror of his car. So no mirrors it was, at least for now.

But that was more than fair considering how far he had come, his hair growing in patchy and awkward but neither of them cared because it really didn't matter. His doctor explained it would simply be up to his body how long it took to fix itself, a fact Billy nodded along to and later groaned about during the ride back home.

Domestic bliss at times, horrible and scary at others. Some nights filled with laughter, others with tears and worry. Highs and lows but the lows becoming less and less frequent as time went on.

A whispered *I love you so much* and a returned *I love you more than anything I could have ever imagined* shared under a blanket in the dark. Followed by slow and careful sex. The only kind Billy could manage but this was different. A moment to remember. Just another in the many they had already shared, along with the many to come.

**Author's Note:**

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